Date	1998	1999	2000	1999/98	2000/99
29	5493	5514	6770	21	1256
30	6258	5434	7266	−824	1832
31	6577	7891	7258	1314	−633
TOTAL	188133	191566	191396	3433	−170

Development of Tourism

587. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tourism earned Rs. 10,417 crores in foreign exchange during 1996-97 and gave direct employment to about 8.5 million accounting for 2.4 per cent of the labour force;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this industry has immense potential for growth; and

(c) if so, the steps Government are taking to encourage this industry to grow?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) The estimated foreign exchange earnings from tourism during 1996-97 were Rs. 10231.80 crores. It is estimated that direct employment in the tourism sector during 1996-97 was about 12.78 million accounting for about 3.3 per cent of the total labour force.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Various steps Government is taking to encourage the tourism industry includes:

(i) Encouraging private investment in the tourism sector including hotels by providing various incentives like tax exemption, interest subsidy, concessional custom duty on import, etc.

(ii) Providing Central financial assistance to tourism projects received from State Governments.

(iii) Improvement of infrastructure facilities, diversification of tourism products, strengthening of publicity efforts, etc.

(iv) Encourage peoples' participation.

(v) improve quality of service by focussing on human resource development etc.

Water Scarcity in the Country

588. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the World Watch Institute's Report "State of the World 2000" predicting water scarcity in the country not only hitting irrigation water supplies but also causing decline in the life expectancy.

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what strategy is contemplated by Government to deal with the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) No such report has been received from the Washington-based World Watch Institute. However, on an average the water availability in the country remains more or less fixed accounting to the natural hydrologic cycle. The per capita water availability is reducing progressively owing to increasing population. The average per capita yearly water availability which is estimated to be about 1900 Cu. m. in 2000 AD may come down to 1350 Cu. m. by 2025 AD at the national level. According to the United Nations' criteria any situation of yearly water availability less than 1000 Cu. m. per capita is considered as scarcity condition. Therefore, even by the end of 2025 A.D., India is not likely to face water scarcity situation at the national level, though uneven water availability may cause local water scarcity in some parts of the country. Measures like Command Area Development Programme and Water Resources Consolidation